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Foundations of College Writing – Dr. Sherry

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**Education Majors**

**Problem**

Although some people may think of the major of education in very broad terms, it is in fact the opposite. When a person is trying to decide what they want to be when they get older, there are many factors that are to be considered. Specifically, for someone who wants to go into the field of education, there is one major question that one asks themselves: What age group would I like to teach? In this paper I address the answer as to why education majors choose the specific field of education that they are majoring in and what factors go into that decision. First, I provide background from three scholarly sources focusing in on each specific major. Then, I address this question using ethnographic data I have found from my interviews. Finally, I will come to a conclusion as to why a person chooses the specific major in education that they do.

**Background**

Studies show that there is a national shortage of qualified personnel in the field of early childhood education and these shortages are magnified in regions characterized by poverty and rural geography. Because of this, more testing is needed for certification in an education program (McLaren, Rutland, pg. 1). With this being stated, one would wonder why someone would choose to go into the field of early childhood education. Then, researchers Howell, Carpenter, and Jones discovered that the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for improved student learning has highlighted the importance of school-university partnerships in preparing teachers capable of increasing student achievement (Howell, Carpenter, and Jones, pg. 1). Teacher candidates cite clinical field placements as the most powerful learning experiences or their pre-service education (Howell, Carpenter, Jones, pg. 2). Because this is available to middle level education majors, one may say that this would be a significant reason in why people choose this major.

Another study shows that when choosing college majors students are more influenced by the expected flow of future earnings than by their expected initial earnings (Berry, Fougere, Maurel, pg. 4). One might say that they chose to be a secondary education major because they expected to be paid more in the long run.

What does this say about why people chose their specific education major? Did these factors come into play when they were deciding on what grade level to teach? What would one think after looking at these studies upon deciding on what major to choose?

**Method**

To answer the questions I have posed, I have interviewed different people in each subdivision under the major of education. I have asked them the core question of why they chose to teach the grade level that they did and what influenced them to make their decision. By doing so, I have used ethnographic methods by studying the why behind people choosing to do certain things. Using ethnographic methods has helped me get a little closer to answering my basic question throughout this paper.

**Findings**

While conducting these interviews, I asked the participants five basic questions: What is your major? Why did you choose this major? How much work do you generally get? Why did you decide to come to college? What made you pick Bloomsburg? I found the answers to these questions very interesting. I interviewed one person from each major: early childhood education, middle level education, and secondary education. First, I asked them each my questions: Why did they choose this major. For the early childhood and middle level participants, they both responded that the reason they chose this was because they love kids. For the secondary education major, they responded that it was because she had a teacher that had influenced her in high school.

Another question I asked was how much work they generally get. 1 The answer to this was pretty similar: a lot. One even said that they get to about five hours a night of homework. The other questions I asked I also received very similar answers to as well.2 When asked about why they decided to attend college and why they chose Bloomsburg, they all responded that they chose to further their education to get a career and they chose Bloomsburg because it was perfect for their major and very welcoming. 3

**Conclusions**

Based on the data that I have collected, it seems that people have chosen their major because all in all they love to teach. They decided that they wanted to help people in any way they can. They love kids of all ages, and they chose Bloomsburg because it was the best school for our major. They see that there are great opportunities for each education major. Personally, I chose to be an early childhood education major for the same reasons. I love kids and the way they think. Some people have connections with different age groups and based on that people decide what major they want to choose.

**References**

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